

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A program supply method for transmitting a program from a server via a network to a user system, comprising the steps of:

transmitting an operating environment of the user system from the user system via the network to the server before supplying the program; and

judging whether the program is operable or not in the operating environment, and transmitting a result of judgement from the server via the network to the user system.

2. The program supply method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying the result of judgement as to whether the program is operable or not in the user system.

3. The program supply method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting an order for the program from the user system via the network to the server when the program is judged to be operable.

4. The program supply method set forth in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

generating a program list made up of programs

which can be supplied from the server;

transmitting the program list from the server via the network to the user system; and

selecting a program from the program list.

5. The program supply method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

generating by the server a program list made up of programs which can be operated in the operating environment of the user system;

transmitting the program list from the server via the network to the user system; and

selecting a program from the program list.

6. The program supply method set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of storing the result of judgement as data of the user system in the server when the program is judged to be inoperable.

7. The program supply method set forth in claim 1, further comprising the step of expanding functions of the user system when a program supplied from the server via the network to the user system is installed.

8. A program supply method, comprising the steps of:

receiving by a server an order for a program via a network from a user system;

transmitting a program in response to the order via the network to the user system; and

asking a user to pay for the program after confirming that the program is operable in the user system.

9. The program supply method set forth in claim 8, further comprising the step of requesting the user system by the server to inform the server of an operating environment via the network.

10. The program supply method set forth in claim 8, further comprising the step of generating by the server a program list made up of programs which are operable in the user system and which can be provided by the server, and providing the program list via the network to the user system.

11. The program supply method set forth in claim 8, further comprising the step of storing by the server an operating environment of the user system.

12. A program supply system which supplies programs

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14. The program supply system set forth in claim 12, wherein said user system orders the program to the server when the result of judgement received from the server indicates that the program is operable.

15. The program supply system set forth in claim 12, wherein said server further includes storing means for storing data of the user system.

16. The program supply system set forth in claim 12, wherein said user system expands its functions when a program supplied via the network from the server is installed.

17. The program supply system set forth in claim 12, wherein said user system is any of a personal computer, a portable terminal, and a complex digital image forming apparatus.

18. The program supply system set forth in claim 13, wherein:

said server further includes list generating means for generating a program list made up of programs which can be supplied to the user system, and transmits the program list via the network to the user system, and

said user system displays the program list on the display means, and selects a program from the program list according to operation on the operation input means.

19. The program supply system set forth in claim 13, wherein:

said server further includes list generating means for generating a program list made up of programs which are operable in the operating environment of the user system, and transmits the program list via the network to the user system, and

said user system displays the program list on the display means and selects a program from the program list according to operation on the operation input means.

20. The program supply system set forth in claim 15, wherein said server stores the result of judgement by the operation judging means when the program is judged to be inoperable.

21. A program supply system which supplies programs from a server via a network to a user system,

wherein:

accounting means for asking a user to pay for the program after confirming the operation of the program.

the program supply system of claim 22 and the program receiving apparatus of claim 24 which are



connected to each other via the network.

26. A computer-readable recording medium having a program for executing the program receiving method of claim 1 recorded thereon.

27. A computer-readable recording medium having a program for executing the program receiving method of claim 23 recorded thereon.